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RFD LETTER

To

Radio Farm Directors

From

Radio and Television Service

Office of Information - U. S. Department of Agriculture

December 2, 1949



CONGRATULATIONS TO NEW NARFD OFFICERS

Last weekend, 81 members of the National Association of Radio Farm Directors met in their annual session at Chicago....and elected officers for the coming year. The new officers are:

President - Roy Battles, WLW, Cincinnati.

Vice-President - Phil Alampi, WJZ, New York.

Secretary-Treasurer - Chris Mack, WNAX, Yankton, S. D.

Our congratulations to the new set of officers. We're looking forward to another year of close cooperation with these men and the association.

For further information about the meeting, see TV report pp. 4-6, and "Among Ourselves," p. 7.

FAO CONFERENCE WINDS UP TUESDAY

The 5th annual conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of UN winds up here in Washington next Tuesday.

Earlier this week, FAO voted to set up its permanent headquarters in Rome. Since '45, it has had temporary headquarters here in Washington. The conference voted down offers from the U.S., Switzerland, and Denmark.

The one big subject for debate at this conference, of course, was FAO's proposed International Commodity Clearing House....to facilitate movement of surplus farm products. In dealing with this problem, the conferees decided not to set up a new corporation to buy and sell surplus food products among nations. But, some type of organization probably will be established so nations can meet to plan buying and selling of surplus food.

The conference bore down heavily on the need for more "Point-4" type of technical help to various countries to aid them in boosting their own output of agricultural products.

Non-Governmental organization representatives said something must be done about the problems of too much production and too little consumption.

AGRICULTURAL BRIEFS

During hearings here this week on sugar consumption requirements for '50, sugar experts brought out repeatedly that there is no sugar shortage in the U.S. The Secretary will issue requirements late this month.

Only 1.16% of USDA butter holdings have dropped to Grade C while in storage under price support. This is brought out in regrading of about 5 million pounds bought between late March and middle of June, this year.

Movement of cotton into loan is running considerably behind a year ago. Through Nov. 24, entries totaled 1,228,400, or 8% of crop....compared with 20% at same time last year. But an increased proportion of ginnings appears headed for loan. Farmers received an average of 27.76¢ Nov. 15....the lowest since midsummer of '46.

PMA has notified State committees that grain growers can obtain loans from lending agencies or CCC to buy mobile grain driers. The aim is to keep high moisture content grain from deteriorating in farm storage.

Requirements for boxcars continue to ease considerably, but still tight spots for some types. Nov. 28, railroads reported 167,000 bu. of grain sorghums on ground at rail right-of-ways in Southwest for lack of storage again nearly 900,000 bu. same time last year.

Wheat sales under the International Wheat Agreement spurted recently. Export payments hit the high for the season....with 56¢ a bushel on the Gulf Coast this week as wheat market prices advanced.

Purchases of '49 crop Irish potatoes through Nov. 29 ran 7,021,696 cwt....with 5,598,363 cwt. of total going to livestock feed....and 1,087,133 to direct distribution.

Apple purchases through Nov. 26 ran 1,041,284 bu. at \$1.70 average.

TURKEY SUPPORT PURCHASES LIGHT

Despite one of the largest turkey crops on record (about 41 million birds), purchases for price support have been very slight. Of the total of about 615 million pounds of turkey (about 65% of which had been marketed through November), USDA has bought only about 749,000 pounds since the program started last August. Prices have held up very well....with prices to farmers at 99% of parity on Nov. 15 as against 129% for the same date last year. In only a few instances have processors felt they could get a better price from the Government than from industry.

HOW EXTENSION AGENTS HELPED RFD'S

A common question among county agricultural agents -- especially those newer to radio -- is how to most effectively provide service to RFD's, along with all their other responsibilities. We queried a number of RFD's as to the type of service they found most useful. Their replies are summarized in the enclosure.

HOG MARKET FIRMER

Hogs are still moving to market in large numbers....with this week's run bigger than for the same week last year....which was the heaviest for the season. But prices were strong early in the week. They weakened some Thursday....but price rises the rest of the week were large enough to continue the support guide-market price margin increase which began last week. This margin increased to 32¢ a hundred last week....and probably will be wider this week than anytime during November.

The guide for the rest of December continues at \$14.75 a hundred.

USDA livestock officials urge farmers to continue to top out their hogs and sell as soon as they reach market weights. They say orderly marketing so far this season has helped keep average hog prices above support levels. BAE reports farmers averaged \$15.60 a hundred as of Nov. 15....against the November average support level of \$15.

USDA OFFICIAL TRAVEL

Memphis, Tenn. -- week of Dec. 5 -- Sec. C. F. Brannan (6th only); O.V. Wells, Chief, Bur. Agr'l Economics (5th only); G. F. Geissler, Manager, Federal Crop Insurance Corp.; Stanley Andrews, Director, Office of Foreign Agr'l Relations; Dr. Hugh H. Bennett, Chief, Soil Conservation Service -- PMA meeting.

Kansas City, Mo. -- Dec. 7 -- Sec. C. F. Brannan, Consumers Cooperative Ass'n.

Columbus, Ohio -- Dec. 12 -- Sec. Brannan, Ohio State Grange.

Atlantic City -- Dec. 5 -- I.W. Duggan, Governor, Farm Credit Administration -- American Vacation Ass'n Convention at Convention Hall.

Boston -- Dec. 13 -- Duggan at National Wool Marketing Corp. meeting.

Little Rock, Ark. -- Dec. 9 -- Andrews at agricultural college.

Boston -- Dec. 13 -- Wells, USDA club.

PARITY RATIO DROPS TO 100

Farmers continued to lose position....compared with the rest of the country....as the parity ratio dropped to 100 on Nov. 15....for the first time since Nov. '41. This ratio, of course, compares prices farmers receive with prices they pay, including for interest and taxes.

BAE reports in "Agricultural Prices" for Nov. 29 that continued drops in prices of hogs, soybeans, corn, eggs, and cotton....only partly offset a considerable increase in truck crop prices....and slight increases for some food grains and dairy products. Hog prices Nov. 15 were the lowest since price ceilings were taken off in mid-summer, '46.

RFD'S PROBE TV AT CHICAGO

RFD's took a careful, interested look at "Practical RFD Television".... with the help of a panel headed by Mal Hansen of WOW in Omaha....during their afternoon session in Chicago, Saturday, November 26.

Page Covers TV Economics

Tom Page of WNBC in New York led off with observations from general TV contacts....and his experience in 2 weeks of "subbing" for a weather telecaster who was on vacation. Some months ago, Tom was enthused over the possibility of bringing the farm to the city....via film. But he found himself up against the requirements of taking about a 7-man crew into the field which....along with editing and other expenses....made the costs prohibitive.

Casting possible shadows of things to come in economy-brand farm telecasting, Tom said that any show that can be put on with only 1 man and 1 camera is welcome. He cited a children's program produced with a fixed camera....and no cameraman....in which one man sits in front of the camera and grins at the children; the show also includes film. At the same time, he indicated that WNBT usually uses 3 cameras.

Pointing out that "no program is welcome unless it has a rather universal appeal," Tom reported that "Hop Along Cassidy" had the highest rating on the station....with sports, dramatics, and other types of movies also ranking high.

(We'll try to get Tom to give us a more detailed account of WNBT's weather show for a later issue.)

Hansen--and "Grass Roots"

Mal Hansen gave up his AM show to do noontime show -- combination TV and simulcast.

The show opens up with 5 minutes of weather -- charts, maps, and a little comedy appeal at the end.

Then, 10 minutes of "Grass Roots." This feature leads off with up to 1½ minutes of information beamed at consumers -- prices of eggs and turkeys, etc. It also includes about 1½ minutes of livestock markets. As an experiment, he tried charts, but found it too expensive to have new ones every day. A newer wrinkle is to have a plastic material over the chart that he can write on and erase for the next day. The presentation of the market information includes various human interest touches: running patter, with remarks about the price line running off the top of the chart....joking with the cartoonist who draws a man with upturned lips when the market is good, and a downcast look when the market is down. After leaving the charts, Mal writes out the main quotations for the day.

City people have remarked that, for the first time, they now know something about livestock prices. Through all the years of AM, they have shut their ears to market reports. But they keep their eyes open....and on the screen....to see what's going to happen next in the visual presentation.

RFD'S PROBE TV AT CHICAGO (CONT'D)

"Grass Roots" also includes guests, slides, movies, etc.

Which brings up another important feature of Mal's TV operation -- his movie making. On his farmer-party tour of the Northwest, an engineer handled both recordings and movie camera. There was a 3-day lag from the shooting of the film in the West until it was on the air. Mal also does a lot of "shooting" himself. WOW-TV has its own processing unit, it can develop the film in half a day.

WOW-TV uses silent film....with narration behind. On the West Coast trip, a secretary took notes on the subjects filmed. Each evening, Mal dictated a story from her notes, as a basis for narration. To use sound track would require a field crew of 3 or 4.

Mal uses stills extensively -- prefers prints to slides. The reason is that, with prints, he has complete control of timing, whereas, with slides, cues are involved. He uses 12 X 16 prints, dull finish.

Program-wise, Mal has pretty much covered the waterfront. The programs have included budding trees in the studio....stubble mulching....meat cutting....poultry culling....corn picking (including picture showing danger points on mechanical pickers, and material on accidents)....corn borers (put one on black card, and split stalks down middle)....sewing demonstration....effect of wheat quality on baking (high and low loaves)....how to mix feed....use of milking machine on life-size model cow (with milk in the machine in advance)....how to take care of air cleaner on tractors, etc. He plans these shows a week ahead.

The shows are always ad lib. Props have been used on every show except one -- where FCA officials were presented. Mal's first choice is live shows -- second, movies. When he puts on livestock -- as he often does -- he saves them to last. That way, the pig, for example, doesn't interrupt the rest of the show with its squeals.

Givens Covers "Face-Lifting"

Bill Givens of WGY-WRGB in Schenectady....who is now on TV Tuesday nights from 6:45 to 7:00....detailed his day-long TV coverage of a conservation field day in Massachusetts last August. A newspaper editor asked to have the event covered on film. Former boss Emerson Markham (now director of TV for NAB) vetoed film....wanted the show live. Bill and an engineering crew surveyed the situation....said live pick-up out of question. Emerson still said, "Live." Then followed aerial pictures of the 165-acre farm to plan what to do....building of roads to get the 8-ton mobile unit from one end of the farm to the other....poles from a utility company to string cable. And biggest job of all: building a transmitter on top of a mountain to relay signal to WRGB tower. It took 3 months to get ready for one telecast.

The day-long coverage included such things as raising of the colors....building of farm pond....farm machinery demonstration....demolition of 40-acre woodlot....with added attractions including 3 big bulldozers racing straight into the cameras with 10-ton boulders.

RFD'S PROBE TV AT CHICAGO (CONT'D)

Kirby Gardens Via TV

Amos Kirby of WCAU in Philadelphia started off in '48 with a program to develop better relations between consumers and farmers. A good deal of his programming has been on gardening. He has a window box....plants in it all types of vegetables....follows the plants through the year, cultivating, fertilizing, harvesting, etc. On the theory that everybody likes to know about insects, he has shown various types of insects....has applied various types of sprays and dusts in the studio.

Other features in the series have ranged from flower arrangement to ice cream making.

Farmer-consumer features have included a show during Apple Week on varieties, and their uses for pies, baking, etc.....with a champion pie baker for female appeal. Similar shows have been done on dairying, peaches, etc. A small fish pond was built in the studio....fingerings dropped in....and a big fish pulled out a few minutes later. Another time, various types of turkeys were exhibited.

Gapen Sums Up

Ken Gapen of USDA emphasized the large amount of information available for TV from the Land Grant Colleges and USDA. He said that most of the subject matter from these sources could be made informative and interesting to city, as well as, farm audiences. For the city audience, the presentations must be highly simplified, with the urban audience angle readily apparent.

For the present, Ken said we are concerned primarily with:

1. Farm and home information for the general audience.
2. Marketing information -- which offers the greatest opportunity.
3. Consumer information -- directed mainly at those who buy and use farm products.

COTTON-TOBACCO VOTES COMING UP

The drive to "get out the vote" for the National cotton marketing quota referendum is entering the home stretch. Thursday, Dec. 15 is "votin' day down South," because cotton growers will decide if they want marketing quotas on their '50 crop....farmers in several States will vote for community PMA farmer-committeemen....and Virginia sun-cured tobacco growers will vote the same day to decide if they want marketing quotas for one year, three years, or not at all.

"Grass roots" promotion is being handled by State, county and community PMA committees. They're pointing out that those who do vote in the referendum will decide, but that the results will affect every grower whether or not he casts his ballot.

FARM-HOME NETWORK PROGRAMS, DEC. 10

- ABC - American Farmer 12:30-1:00 p.m. EST: 1) "Business Side of Farming," Dana Reynolds; 2) "Latest Developments in Weed Control," by transcription from WNAX, Sioux Falls, S.D.....with RFD Chris Mack and guests.
- NBC - National Farm and Home Hour 1:00-1:30 p.m. EST: 1) "USDA Headlines," Ken Gopen; 2) "Oklahoma Soils Judging Contest," from WKY, Oklahoma City. Participants include RFD Sandy Saunders of WKY; Harley Daniel, Red Plains Conservation Experiment Station; Ed Roberts, soil conservationist, Oklahoma A & M; and Frank Dunaway, farmer from Jones, Okla.
- CBS - CBS Farm News 3:30-3:45 p.m. EST: Allen Jackson, with farm news, guest speaker, etc. (This is first broadcast following football season hiatus.)

AMONG OURSELVES

RFD's Meet in Chicago

Eighty-one of the about 175 paid-up members of the National Association of Radio Farm Directors....plus several non-members....took part in lively sessions at the Stevens in Chicago, Nov. 26-27.

The TV session.....a fast-moving one that seemed to hold strong interest....is reported on pp. 4-6. Sunday afternoon, the group concentrated on how to sell farm programs, and keep them sold. The participants ranged all the way from agricultural concerns with products to sell.....through advertising agencies.....station commercial representatives.....and the RFD. Several RFD's observed that this session, too, was the most informative of the type they had attended.

Farm Safety Awards

The National Safety Council announced awards to networks and stations during the NARFD meeting.

Winning networks were:

ABC, "American Farmer," -- Bob White.

Texas Quality Network -- Andy Adam of Texas A & M.

~~Rural Radio Network at Ithaca~~ -- ~~Robert Child~~.

Fourteen individual station awards included: CHUM, Toronto; KASI, Ames; KDKA, Pittsburgh; KFEQ, St. Joseph, Mo.; KPOJ, Gresham, Oreg.; KSOO, Sioux Falls, S.D.; KUSD, Vermillion, S.D.; KVG, Stockton, Calif.; WFIL, Philadelphia; WGY, Schenectady; WHO, Des Moines; WIOU, Kokomo, Ind.; WRFD, Columbus, O.; WTIC, Hartford, Conn.

The Safety Council reports that....thanks to these and other efforts....the number of all accidents last year was the lowest on record. Auto deaths also hit the lowest point on record.

AMONG OURSELVES (CONT'D)

National Farm and Home Goes TV

After a cautious try last year on a network of two stations, the National Farm and Home Hour went TV this year with a big splash....over 25 stations of NBC-TV....carrying the education and glamor of the "International" and "Club Congress" in Chicago to millions of viewers in the northern quarter of the United States.

During a half-hour "warm-up"....although if you were to take the term literally, the show warmed up in more like 30 seconds....the cameras covered a diversity of subjects. The parade of the would-be champion cattle. New and old-type hams. A demonstration of curling a calf for the show ring. Sheep shearing demonstration. Interviews with 4-H members. Etc.

Came 2 p.m., and the viewers circled in on Chicago (via film) to the arena at the International....for the formal opening of the Farm and Home Hour. Following a look at the animals and commentary, the show moved back to studio for background on the beef cattle industry, meat cutting demonstration, meat cooking and care. Then alternation of studio and arena for 4-H members, film of grandchampion carlot cattle, etc.....followed by selection of grandchampion steer just before the wind-up of the show.

Talent included Everett Mitchell and Chet Randolph in studio....and Paul Visser covering the arena with hand mike and sure, rapid-fire commentary. Representing USDA were Ken Gapen, Maynard Speece, and Tom Noone. There were numerous others in studio and arena.

4-H Radio and TV

A partial report (as of Tuesday) revealed terrific radio and TV coverage of the International 4-H Club Congress in Chicago. The radio and TV committee reported representation by 69 radio stations, 23 full network broadcasts, 11 television shows, 40 local broadcasts, and about 300 transcriptions. Perhaps next week we can give you a few details of some of the more distinctive features of the shows.

Office Personals

I got in from Chicago yesterday. Ken, Tom, and Maynard will be back in the office Monday.

Cordially,

Dana

Dana D. Reynolds
Act'g Ass't Director of Information
for Radio and Television

Enclosure

How Extension Agents Service RFD's

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RFD LETTER

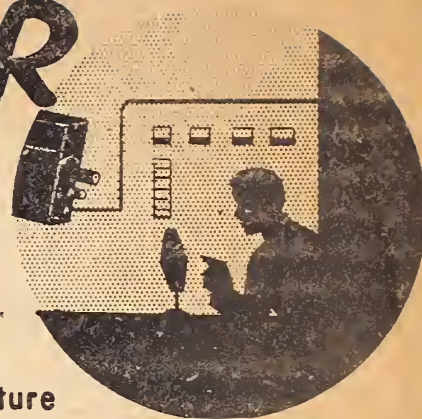
To

Radio Farm Directors

From

Radio and Television Service

Office of Information - U. S. Department of Agriculture



December 9, 1949

THE FAO CONFERENCE IN REVIEW

The first page and a half of the enclosed digest highlights what happened during the International Food and Agriculture Conference that wound up here Tuesday of this week. We're giving you a little further interpretive comment on p. 4.

CROP COTTON ESTIMATE RAISED

Yesterday's BAE Cotton Crop Report gives this picture of the '49 cotton crop....as of Dec. 1:

Estimated crop -- 16,034,000 bales....up 3% from Nov. 1....the sixth largest crop on record....and comparing with 10-year average of 11,306,000 bales.

Acreage -- in cultivation July 1, '49, 27,359,000....compared with 23,163,000 in '48....and 22,015,000 for 10-year average.

Yield -- at 285.8 pounds....is third highest on record....and compares with 312.6 in '48....and '48-47 average of 254 pounds.

INDUSTRIAL LEVEL CONTINUES HIGH

With the passing of the seasonal marketing peak for most products, the BAE economists think prices are likely to remain fairly stable the next month or so.

They point out (in the Demand and Price Situation for Dec. 9) that in view of sharply depleted stocks of coal and steel, these industries are likely to run at a fairly high rate the next few months. Near-record construction activity....and the end of 8 months drop in total business inventories....also indicate high domestic activity.

COWS AND HENS SET NOVEMBER RECORD

Milk and egg production set new records for November.

AGRICULTURAL BRIEFS

USDA officials are awaiting Dec. 20 Crop Report on seeded acreage and indicated production of winter wheat as an indication of compliance with acreage allotments. Meanwhile, scattered reports from the field indicate good compliance.

A meeting is scheduled here for early January of PMA's poultry industry advisory committee....to discuss ways to support prices of eggs and poultry in '50. USDA probably will announce general programs for poultry and eggs well in advance of the meeting. But specific methods of support will be decided upon after hearing the recommendations of the committee.

Cotton loan entries increased to the heaviest weekly volume of the season for the week ended Dec. 1....with entries totaling 275,000 bales....compared with 197,000 the week before. This brings the total for the year to 1,501,000 bales....or slightly less than half as many as to the same date last year. Closing date for loans on '49 cotton is April 30.

The rice situation is much improved....with indications that prices will hold around the support level. The December Crop Report will supply situation information needed in making a decision on acreage allotments and marketing quotas.

Speaking on crop insurance at the PMA meeting in Memphis, G. F. Goessler of USDA expressed a desire to keep programs simple....and said that more and more in crop insurance, they are moving toward mutual type insurance with local administration.

SEE NOVEMBER "MARKETING ACTIVITIES" FOR STORIES

You'll find several good stories in the November issue of "Marketing Activities."

PMA committeemen can tell in a minute whether a man's "back 40" is really a "back 35"....just by looking at an aerial photograph. (See "Surveyors With Wings.") . . . And you'll find the results of a study by 13 State experiment stations on just where eggs lose grade between the hen's nest and the consumer's table. Along with other good background articles.

EGG PRICES DROP

Egg prices hit the '49 seasonal peak in September....a month or earlier than in most recent years. BAE's "Poultry and Egg Situation" reports that farmers got an average of 47.1¢ a dozen in mid-November....or 11.2¢ below the '48 price. The economists think that egg prices will continue to drift lower through the flush season the first half of next year.

PMA CONFERENCE SURVEYS FARM PROBLEMS

State, Area, and Federal PMA representatives took a general look at the entire agricultural situation in their annual conference this week in Memphis.

Farm Price Outlook

Running through much of the conference, of course, was the question of prices -- present and future.

Secretary Brannan pointed out that farm prices have dropped much faster than other prices -- about 22% in less than 2 years. But farmers still pay within 4% of what they did 2 years ago.

BAE Chief Oris Wells pointed out further that in '41....for the first time in 20 years....farm prices topped parity. Now, for the first time since '41, prices are down to parity. He emphasized the need for farm price supports.

Speaking from the viewpoint of private business, Paul Willis, President of the Grocery Manufacturers Association, said that: When people weigh the costs of disaster which might come from having the bottom fall out of farm prices....against the costs of continuing farm price supports....he thinks they will agree that continuation of supports is in the public interest.

Foreign Prospects

As the conferees analyzed the domestic farm situation, they kept a weather eye on the situation abroad.

OFAR Director Stanley Andrews reviewed the export situation on wheat, fats and oils, cotton, rice, fruits, and tobacco....and observed that from now on, the U.S. will find it more difficult to sell in world markets. One reason is our unwillingness to buy from other countries. In the past 3 or 4 years, exports have exceeded imports by \$6 billion.

Assistant ECA Administrator Wood said, "The gap between rich and poor nations has widened in the last 50 years....and living standards in Europe have declined for 30 years. Also, three-fourths of the world's population live as poorly as their grandparents. ECA's efforts to help Europeans help themselves....and the work of the organization....have helped stop Communism as evidenced by recent elections. Turning to trade, he said U.S. can't expect exports unless it imports. ECA operations strengthened the farm market, but farmers can expect adjustment as exports decline.

Postwar Adjustments

PMA Administrator Trigg said that the foreign trade outlook makes it clear that we must look to the domestic market for the great bulk of our agricultural sales. After everything is done to hold foreign markets, to fill domestic demand, and to build and hold adequate reserves, the next step is to help 6 million American farmers adjust their production in line with effective demand. Noting comment that the U.S. should not cut production in the view of world food needs, Mr. Brannan added that we must make it clear at home and abroad that crop adjustment means shifts in production....not cutting production.

BEHIND THE FAO CONFERENCE

Just a few more points about the annual conference of the International Food and Agricultural Organization....which wound up here Tuesday of this week.....as we get them from James Howard, Secretary of the U.S. FAO delegation.

The Story of ICCH

Big headline story, of course, was the proposed International Commodity Clearing House....to facilitate exports of surpluses.

In brief, surplus-producing countries such as the U.S. would put up capital to finance operations....and absorb losses. ICCH might sell surpluses for dollars at a cut rate....or at "going" prices in "soft" currency.

The official U.S. Government point of view was that such an operation would cost the U.S. pretty heavily....that we're already putting up around \$6 billion a year for foreign aid. . . . Our Government said further that it wanted to do nothing that would discourage revival of trade through normal trade channels....that it wanted to do everything possible to encourage revival. . . . And U.S. surpluses, alone, can't begin to meet world food needs.

With the ICCH proposal voted down, FAO set up a new unit to consider plans to move surpluses, and to make recommendations to surplus and deficit countries.

Our Government said, in effect to this agency, "If we have a surplus of, say, eggs, we may consult with you and say we have some eggs to sell at reduced prices....or for soft currency. Can you suggest any takers? Or, if we've already found a customer, we may consult your committee to see if anyone objects to our selling on that basis. This, in practical effect, is what the ICCH proposal added up to."

Meanwhile, our Government said it would do everything possible to help other countries earn dollars to buy our products through normal trade. For example, we've cut our tariffs to half of what they were in '33. And another trade conference looking to further adjustments is coming up next year.

The Future for "Point 4"

In contrast with ICCH, nearly everybody favored more "Point 4" -- more technical aid.

Our Government took the view that two-thirds of the world's workers are employed in farming....whereas only about 2% of these are in the U.S. The best way to provide more food for other countries is to help the rest of the world's farmers boost production. A bill introduced into Congress provides for additional funds to UN agencies (including FAO) for technical aid, as well as to U.S. agencies carrying on this work.

FAO's Move to Rome

FAO probably won't move headquarters from Washington to Rome for a year or so.

A LOOK-AHEAD ON WEED CONTROL

You probably will want to read **very** carefully the enclosed "Taking Stock of Weed Research."

Note in particular the discussion of chemical and other control methods.

Dr. Salter points out (last 2 paragraphs on p. 3) that "Chemical weed control methods are here to stay without question...(and) will undoubtedly play an ever increasing role in weed control programs....It is my considered opinion that from the standpoint of a well-balanced weed research program the chemical aspect is being over-emphasized. We must never lose sight of the fact that there is no panacea for weed control, and chemicals cannot be considered a means to avoid all other weed control measures. If the farming job is done right, chemicals may not be needed....During periods of declining agricultural prices we can anticipate an ever increasing tendency for farmers to fall back on weed control methods that do not call for a cash outlay for materials."

FARM-HOME NETWORK FEATURES, DEC. 17

- ABC - American Farmer 12:30-1:00 p.m. EST, 1) "Business Side of Farming," Dana Reynolds; 2) "Research Laboratory for Irrigated Cotton," with recording from Las Cruces, N.M.; guests include Charles Bennett, USDA, and Cecil Herrell, N.M. Extension.
- NBC - National Farm and Home Hour 1:00-1:30 p.m. EST, 1) "USDA Headlines," Ken Gapen; 2) "Holiday Meals," Zelta Rodenwold, USDA.
- CBS - CBS Farm News 3:30-3:45 p.m. EST, with Claude Mahoney and guests. (See "Among Ourselves.")

WILL YOU HELP US ON OUR MAILING LISTS?

We've been cooperating with our colleagues handling USDA mailing lists to try to make the lists more quickly responsive to your desires for additions and deletions for various materials. From what you may know of the headaches of private concerns with, say, just one periodical to handle, you can imagine the complexities of dealing with upwards of a thousand different mailing lists....bearing upwards of a half million names....and involving a dozen or 15 different USDA agencies. Without burdening you further with intricacies, one of the most effective means we've uncovered so far to improve the mailing list situation is to have all your requests come through our office -- rather than direct to individual USDA agencies.

SO, when you want to be added to, or dropped, from a list -- will you please WRITE RADIO AND TELEVISION SERVICE.

One of the main advantages is to help us clear up duplications where you or your station are getting two or more copies of the same thing under different names and addresses.

FROM THE SCIENTIFIC FRONT

The information folks in BPISAE* give us another round-up of new scientific developments in their field.

Can you improve on nature's handiwork in fruits? Well, the scientists are trying. Latest is to use new growth regulators (as tree sprays) to make fruit ripen quicker....and possibly to produce bigger fruit. The scientists sprayed 18 varieties of peaches with 2,4,5-trichlorophenoxyacetic acid (or 2,4,5-T). With the right combination, the spray ripened the peaches several days early. . . .These sprays also speeded up ripening of 3 early summer, and 2 fall, apple varieties. . . .But this research is still unfinished business.

Also in the mill are plans for all-purpose and farm refrigerators.... geared to the needs of the farm....as against the emphasis on commercial and industrial storage in most refrigerators. Engineers at Beltsville have built a farm-type, general purpose, walk-in refrigerator with 3 compartments -- 1 for frozen storage at zero, a chill or general purpose storeroom at 35 degrees, and an egg storage compartment. . . .Texas A & M engineers are testing a refrigerator based on a survey last winter. . . .And agricultural engineers in Washington (State) are studying present refrigeration to see how farmers use it in relation to locker plants.

In the cereal field, USDA and Louisiana scientists are testing radio-frequency dielectric heating to dry and condition rice. This system makes it possible to dry quickly and uniformly. It may make it possible to dry rice as well as corn, small grains, and grass seeds....quickly and cheaply, with less damage to the grain.

Nearly 10 years ago, USDA started cooperative work in Latin America to help develop a natural rubber supply closer home....and to bolster the economy of our neighbors to the south. They now report that top-budding and other techniques appear to have removed the major obstacle to establishing high-yielding, blight-resistant rubber trees in Mexico. A good many hundred acres have been planted.

Now England experiment station agronomists stress the need for long-time experiment to show the place, value, and usefulness of raw phosphate to improve pasture and grass lands. They say there is very little information about the relative effect of raw phosphate and superphosphate on yields.... where equal amounts of each were used.

The Bureau recently offered to Federal, State, and commercial specialists more than 500 foreign grape varieties....which represented 2 years of work to collect. . . .And some 200 foreign cherry varieties introduced just before World War II are now fruiting at the Plant Introduction Garden at Chico, Calif.

*Bureau of Plant Industry, Soils, and Agricultural Engineering

SHORTER HOURS ON THE FARM

BAE says farm operators worked an average of about 9.8 hours a day about Dec. 1....and hired help 8.6 hours....both less than a year ago.

AMONG OURSELVES

Mahoney To Do CBS Farm News

Claude Mahoney picks up tomorrow with "CBS Farm News"....on the first show following the "shut-down" for the football season. Claude says he spent his first 16 years on an Indiana farm....milking by lantern light....and doing other farm chores. During his reportorial career on the Indianapolis Star, he handled a good many agricultural stories. Since coming to Washington in '36, he has done some agricultural reporting. And he operates a 10-acre farm in Fairfax County, just outside Washington. He will handle "CBS Farm News" along with other assignments. (See Network Schedule.)

Following the dropping of the "Country Journal" last spring, Allen Jackson did the farm news show, but has been unable to resume it because of a heavy broadcast schedule.

How Agents Service RFD's

From RFD Jim Chapman of WTAM Cleveland comes ideas on county agent services to RFD's....too late to get into the mimeograph enclosed with last week's RFD Letter. Says Jim:

"We have about a half dozen county agents who send us regularly copies of their weekly news releases; two who send us copies of their own weekly radio scripts used on their local stations; and several others who send us special releases. I believe in the latter cases the agents do not issue regular weekly news or information material, probably because they find the papers in their communities prefer to get news on a day-to-day basis or when something's really cooking. These agents get practically 100% use of the special releases they do put out.

"Many of our agents keep us posted on their meetings and work schedule but far more do not." Jim then expresses hope for re-establishment of "a rather extensive calendar of farm events compiled by the State" office.

"Some of our agents tell us about farmers and 4-H members and so on who have broadcast possibilities, but we are able to dig up more of those than we can....(use) so that is a minor help...."

As to handling of requests for bulletins, etc., these are usually sent (by mutual agreement with the District Supervisor) to the agents in counties from which the requests originate.

The mimeograph enclosed with last week's Letter...."How Agents Service RFD's"....summarizes comments from a dozen RFD's.

Radio Tips for County Agents

Another batch of monthly tip sheets on news, radio, and visuals....from Minn. Extension to county Ext. agents....has just reached our desk.

AMONG OURSELVES (CONT'D)

Himebaugh to Help ECA in Europe

Our Director of Information -- Keith Himebaugh -- is heading for Europe Tuesday.....to work with ECA in setting up an agricultural information program. He'll be over there about 3 months; in other words, probably until early March.

During his absence, Associate Director of Information -- R.L. (Lyle) Webster will be acting director.

TV Puppet Show Features 4-H

Among the many special radio and television shows devoted to 4-H during Club Congress was the "Kukla, Fran, and Ollie" puppet show on NBC-TV. Among other things, the dragon -- Ollie -- had himself a toy horse as a project. The kinescope of this program will be shown Dec. 16 on NBC-TV network stations in: Atlanta; Baltimore; Birmingham; Boston; Fort Worth; Greensboro, N.C.; Huntington, W.Va.; Houston; Jacksonville; Kansas City, Mo.; Los Angeles; Oklahoma City; Omaha; St. Paul; San Diego. On Dec. 17, it will be shown in Louisville, Ky.

Cordially,



Kenneth M. Gopen
Ass't Director of Information
for Radio and Television

Enclosures:

Digest of FAO Conference
Taking Stock of Weed Research
Crop Reports to be Issued
Agricultural Outlook Digest

670102110

RFD LETTER

To

Radio Farm Directors

From

Radio and Television Service

Office of Information - U. S. Department of Agriculture

December 16, 1949

HIGHLIGHTS OF PMA CONFERENCE

In the discussion of farm policy at the conference of State, Area, and Federal PMA representatives in Memphis last week, the general consensus ran about like this:

Price Support -- Favored good level of support....but with regard for relationships between various commodities. For example, if USDA finds it necessary to continue hog supports beyond next March, support should be geared closely to support level for corn. Discussion centered around a corn-hog ratio of between 10-1 and 12-1.

Production Adjustment -- Most of talk was about '51 and after. Pretty general feeling that farmer should stay within allotments on all crops under control in order to be eligible for price support on any one. For example, if he raises wheat and cotton (and both are under allotment) he should keep within allotted acreage on both to be eligible for price support on either one.

Conservation -- Need conservation requirements in '51 and after.... but no conclusions as to specific provisions. Committee did advocate, however, methods to assure adequate supplies of grass and legume seeds for adjusted acres.

Storage -- Still places where farmers unable to take advantage of price support because of lack of storage. First emphasis should be on storage on the farm. But committee recognized that farm storage should be backed up by commercial and co-op facilities. It is difficult to store some commodities on the farm. For example, difficult to store grain on farms in parts of Southwest because of insect damage; and cottonseed in some areas because of lack of proper drying and storage facilities.

AGRICULTURAL BRIEFS

Dried egg purchases for price support have been extremely heavy for the second week in a row....with 3,680,883 pounds for the week, and 67,810,142 so far for the year. . . . During the Spring of '50, supplies of eggs are expected to be as great as this past spring, or greater. PMA is studying a campaign to stimulate greater use of eggs in the spring.

Purchases of apples under price support programs totaled 1,487,416 bushels through December 10.

Hog market prices held steady this week....but the margin above the hog support guide may be slightly less than the 40¢ margin last week. Marketings dropped from last week, when they were the heaviest this season. PMA encourages farmers to continue orderly marketings at reasonable weights. And cautions that holding back hog for feeding to heavier weights could easily bring substantially greater discounts for those weights the coming weeks.

Under the export subsidy program, 402,444 boxes of apples, 75,587 boxes of pears, and 20,000 boxes of oranges had moved, through December 10.

Purchase of '49 crop potatoes through Dec. 13 totaled 8,048,581 cwt....with 6,084,590 cwt. going to livestock feed....1,367,031 to direct distribution.... 219,282 to flour.

Exports of grain have been running considerably heavier in December than in November....but only 231 million bushels for the first half of the marketing year, or well below the 338 million for the same period last year.

Participation in the school lunch program the first month of this school year ran 20% ahead of the month last year.

Handling of grain cars has improved at all ports....and more boats are available in the Gulf area. But bulk grain is still held from New Orleans port by embargo.

PMA has ready for distribution a leaflet, "Know Your Butter Grades."

FARM AND HOME NETWORK SCHEDULE, DEC. 24

ABC - American Farmer (Cancelled)

NBC - National Farm and Home Hour 1:00 - 1:30 p.m. EST, (1) "Story of Agriculture at Boys' Town," and music by Boys' Town choir....in direct pick-up announced by Mal Hansen of WOW in Omaha, and Everett Mitchell.

CBS - CBS Farm News - 3:30 - 3:45 p.m. EST, Claude Mahoney with farm news, and USDA feature on poinsettias.

FARM INCOME DOWN

BAE says farm income this year, through November, is down 10%.

THE STORY ON PRICE SUPPORT FUNDS

The USDA men who administer price supports are wrestling with a problem of arithmetic for '50 crops that's about the toughest they've ever had.

With just the 11 products for which supports are mandatory -- the 6 basic and 5 non-basic commodities -- CCC's borrowing authority is pretty well booked up. Under the new Farm Act of '49, CCC already is receiving requests to support some of the possibly 100 permissive products eligible for support under the new law. It won't be able to provide support for all commodities it would like to or that need support. The problem is one of finding how to use existing fund in the way they will do the most good.

This is how finances stack up -- as of now:

Total CCC borrowing authority	--	\$4-3/4 billion
Currently invested in price support	--	\$3-plus billion
Reserve to cover operating costs, warehouse expenses, purchase agreements, etc.	--	\$1/2-plus billion

In other words, as of today, CCC has only about \$1 billion left to finance any additional price support commitments.

What may happen between now and the '50 season is a question, of course. A large share of the \$3 billion now invested in price supports for wheat, cotton, and other commodities will be recovered as farmers pay off their loans, and as CCC sells the products to which it has taken title. How much of that CCC will have to re-invest in those mandatory commodities is a question. If production controls work out, these commodities may be in a better situation price-wise.... and may not require as much support as at present. If so, more money will be freed for the permissive group.

At best, however, price support officials say, they'll have to make selective use of price supports for the permissive group....on the basis of doing the most possible good with the money available.

By way of reminder, the basics are wheat, cotton, corn, tobacco, peanuts, and price. . . .The non-basics for which support is mandatory are: milk and butterfat, wool and mohair, tung nuts, honey, and Irish potatoes.

The permissives include a host of important commodities, such as, poultry, eggs, hogs, and most fruits and vegetables, except potatoes.

WHEAT EXPORTS DROP

BAE economists look for U. S. exports of wheat and products to run about 400 million bushels in '49-50....against 501 million in '48-49.

The importing countries are better off for wheat....following 2 generally unsatisfactory crops. Moreover, U. S. exports got off to a slow start because of delay in providing funds for subsidy of wheat moving under the International Wheat Agreement.

THE SCORE ON CROP CONTROLS

For the first time since the war, the 6 basic commodities are under -- or face the prospect of -- some degree of adjustment control. This is the tally for the '50 crop:

Wheat -- Acreage allotments, but no marketing quotas.

Cotton -- Allotments, and quotas (as approved yesterday).

Tobacco -- Allotments and marketing quotas for the 4 major types.

Peanuts -- Allotments and marketing quotas.

Rice -- Allotments required by law. Marketing quotas, no decisions yet.

Corn -- Under the present supply situation, the formula would seem to require acreage allotments; decision due some time before February 1. So far as quotas are concerned, however, it's now a toss-up as to whether they may be required.

BRITISH EXPERT DISCUSSES FOOT-AND-MOUTH

A man with lots of background in foot-and-mouth disease problems -- Dr. I. A. Galloway of Britain -- has been taking another look at control work in Mexico, and talking with our folks here.

Among other things, Dr. Galloway has been consulting with the Bureau of Animal Industry on plans for the proposed foot-and-mouth research laboratory in the U.S. . . Dr. Galloway thinks that there isn't nearly enough research yet on foot-and-mouth....that our proposed research program will help a lot in cleaning up the disease in Mexico and in keeping it out of the U.S....as well as, helping other countries. After all, he says, as long as there's any foot-and-mouth disease around, it's every country's worry....As to possible danger of infection spreading from a research "lab," Dr. Galloway says the British institute is within 30 miles of London....with fairly large dairy herds grazing within 5 or 6 miles of the "lab." Through rigid regulations....such as those proposed for the U. S. "lab"....no infection has escaped from the research center.

The British do, of course, have outbreaks from time to time from livestock products shipped in from other countries. They follow the slaughter, quarantine, and other measures that the U. S. has used.

Dr. Galloway praised the control work under way in Mexico.

BRANNAN DISCUSSES LOW-INCOME FAMILY PROBLEM

Secretary Brannan proposed to the Sub-Committee on Low-Income Families of the Joint Committee on the Economic Report a 3-point program to aid low-income families (1) a redevelopment program for small farms, (2) stimulation of industry in under-developed areas, and (3) a program for hired workers. We can send you a copy of his testimony.

COTTON FARMERS APPROVE QUOTAS

As we go to press, nearly complete returns indicate that farmers have "voted in" marketing quotas for '50 crop cotton....by a vote of about 88.7%.

For farmers who stay within their acreage allotments, the price support level is 90% of parity. If they had "voted down" quotas, the level would have dropped to 50% to cooperators. Farmers who plant beyond their allotments (1) will not be eligible for loans, and (2) will be penalized 50% of the parity price on all cotton he sells from his excess acreage.

BEHIND THE COTTON ALLOTMENT PROBLEM

We've asked the PMA folks for a fill-in on questions that have come up in some parts of the South about the division of cotton allotments among individual farms.

This is the story in brief:

A lot of amendments, exceptions, etc., had crept into the old legislation on allotments. Upshot was that....under the old law....USDA would have had to set a national allotment of around twenty-seven million acres for '50. That's nearly as big as this year's acreage (27,359,000 on July 1)....and far too much cotton for present conditions. So Congress changed the law (in the Farm Act of '49) to permit scaling down acreage....To safeguard against too stiff a cut, Congress put in a proviso to keep the national allotment from going below twenty-one million for '50.

The national allotment of twenty-one million acres for '50 was broken down to States and counties....without particular question. But when county allotments were broken down to individual farms, a few growers in virtually all of the 20 cotton States protested that they had been cut too heavily. The problem stems from:

1. the change in the law that gives a man a certain percentage of his crop land....as an allotment....rather than a percentage of his historical base....as previously; and
2. the provision giving growers with less than 5 acres a minimum of their highest acreage in recent years.

There isn't enough leeway to take care of other producers. So some growers with more than 5 acres have been cut pretty heavily.

Congressional leaders, in conference with USDA officials, have considered proposals to give relief to these growers. Some proposals discussed last week are not feasible under the present law. However, there has been indication that Congress will take up the problem when it convenes after the first of the year.

The enclosed statement by Secretary Brannan gives further background.



AMONG OURSELVES

WBZ-TV Caters to the Consumer

RFD Roger Harrison of WBZ and WBZ-TV in Boston is on TV with a 15-minute "Family Food Basket"....put on in cooperation with Charlie Eshbach of the Extension Marketing Information office in Boston.

The show is aimed at the food-conscious housewife and her pocketbook....with information on what to buy, where to buy, how to buy, and how to use. Roger says, agency experts will be frequent guests, armed with the latest food facts and market figures to make it easier for the housewife and her week-end shopping.

Roger adds that the first program went on the air un-announced....in place of the test pattern. A bulletin on apples offered at the end of the program brought more than 100 requests....which Roger considers "a little remarkable, since it was unscheduled, and preceded by a test pattern."

Comes a Christmas card from Honorary NARFD member John Douglass of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, with John standing alongside a pair of skis.

And from a newer member of the RFD ranks -- Morihiko Kasama, chief of the Farm Division, Broadcasting Corporation of Japan -- comes word that he and his farm division....and 49 Japanese RFD's....are moving right along with farm programming in Japan. If we think we have problems in localizing, Mr. Morihiko says that each Japanese "bloc" has its own customs and manners in a feudalistic way. These blocs are self-supporting economically and spiritually. So a farm program for one bloc may not fit another.

Cordially,

Ken

Kenneth M. Gapen
Ass't Director of Information
for Radio and Television

Enclosure:

Secretary Brannan's Statement.

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RFD LETTER

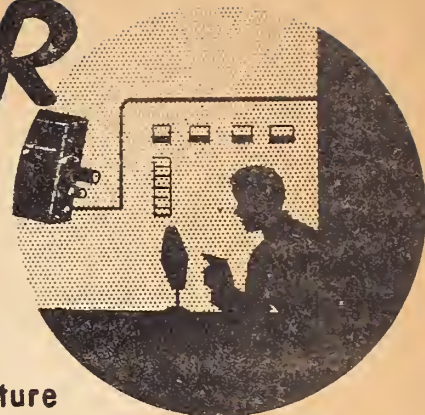
To

Radio Farm Directors

From

Radio and Television Service

Office of Information - U. S. Department of Agriculture



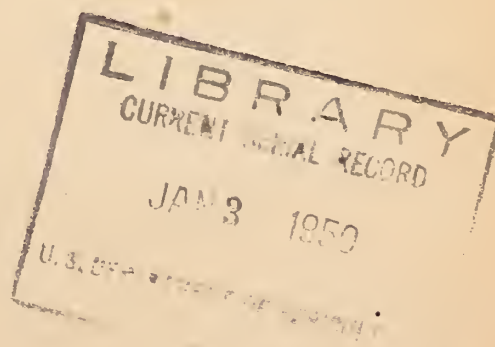
December 23, 1949

FROM OUR HOUSE, to YOUR HOUSE --

In the outer office, Ann L. Fox is rushing along on the stencils, just about ready for this final page of the Letter. A colleague up the hall just dropped in to exclaim about the little Christmas display that Sam Gaumont (just back from the hospital) fixed up on Lois Olson's desk. Lois, the usual intermediary between this typewriter and you, is Christmassing at home in Minnesota. On the desk are thoughtful remembrances from RFD friends out through the country....the folks who work long hours for agriculture....who give us and other agricultural agencies our entree into millions of farm homes.

From our little holiday circle, we extend to the about 400 of you and to your and our RFD friends in other lands....a Very, Very Merry Christmas.

Yes, and a Happy New Year too....with the hope that we may contribute our little mite toward making it a better year than this one.



FROM THE RESEARCH FRONT

Again, our information friends at Beltsville give us a thumbnail sketch of what the plant scientists and engineers* are doing.

The U. S. Munitions Board is looking ahead to providing strategic materials for wartime. It has allotted to USDA plant scientists funds to do research on 4 strategic crops. The crops include: Hard fibers such as sanseveria (a substitute for abaca in high quality cordage)....to be studied in Florida....yucca to be studied in its native Southwest....and phorium (or "New England hemp") to be tested in the Gulf Coast region and on the West Coast from the Mexican border north to Oregon....Castor beans for the marginal Cotton and Corn Belt of the Mississippi drainage, with some work in the San Joaquin and Imperial Valleys of California....Canaigre to be planted in Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas....And, gasyule, with wartime investigations to be continued in the Salinas Valley of California. The aim is to develop improved strains; and to maintain a seed stockpile. Experimental studies on new lines indicate 70% higher rubber yields. Production is also being mechanized.

In the Northwest, Anjou pears bloom heavily....but usually set a relatively light crop. Two USDA scientists report they have increased the set of fruit on individual limbs in 2 orchards near Wenatchee, Wash., by spraying the bloom with a solution of boric acid. Work is also under way to find out what effect boric acid sprays will have on a wide range of fruits in the Northwest.

RMA allotted funds for a cooperative program to introduce, test, and maintain basic plant breeding stock. Regional banks for germ plasm are being set up at Ames....and at Glenn Dale, Md. Many breeders now urge a national bank for germ plasm....located preferably in the area West where humidity can be controlled easily.

On December 17, the new U. S. Cotton Ginning Branch Laboratory was opened up at Mesilla Park, N. M. This new "lab" is a subsidiary of the U. S. Cotton Ginning Laboratory at Stoneville, Miss....and will work on adapting methods and equipment developed at Stoneville to conditions in the Southwest.

FARM AND HOME NETWORK FEATURES, DEC. 31

ABC - American Farmer (Cancelled for holiday program)

NBC - National Farm and Home Hour 1:00-1:30 p.m. EST, 1) "USDA Headlines," Ken Gapen; 2) "Texas PCA's Repay U. S. Loans "

CBS - CBS Farm News - 3:30-3:45 p.m. EST, Claude Mahoney with farm news; and 2) USDA feature on production credit with Ivy Duggan of FCA.

PIGS, PIGS, PIGS

Farmers raised about 13% more pigs in '49 than in '48....with the spring crop 15% larger....and the fall, 10% larger. And from farmers' reports, we may have about 6% more pigs next spring than this past spring. (This; from BAE's Dec. 21 Pig Crop Report.)

*Bureau of Plant Industry, Soils, and Agricultural Engineering

EUROPE'S FARMING RECOVERS--BUT NOT ENOUGH

Yesterday, we had an opportunity to get some first-hand facts about what's happening farm- and food-wise in Europe....from the man who spearheads ECA's food and agricultural operation in Marshall Plan countries. He's a man with many years experience in farm management and other agricultural activities in the U. S.- and several years work abroad--Ben H. Thibodeaux. Here are a few high points from the discussion:

How well are the Europeans eating now?

They're getting nearly as much to eat as before the war....but the food is poorer quality. In fact, Europe's food situation has improved dramatically the past 18 months. Partly because of the good harvest of '48....fairly good crops in '49... and, of course, ECA help on imports.

Just how much is ECA helping Europe on food?

Europe is importing about 30% of her food....or about her normal amount. ECA is financing about 80% of all her food and agricultural imports from the U. S.

What will the Marshall Plan countries' food and agricultural situation be by '52 when ECA aid is supposed to end?

These countries are aiming to boost production about 15% above pre-war by that time....as against possible 14% increase in population. So, they'll need to import as much as before the war--and probably more. In short, they're making splendid recovery....but not fast enough.

What can Europe do--what is ECA trying to help them do--to put their agriculture on a sounder basis?

ECA's aim might be summed up under 4 general objectives:

1. ECA and the council of Marshall plan representatives are working on the theory that Europe needs to boost food production....that she needs to produce food at lower costs....but that non-economic production should be avoided.
2. Europe has little additional land to bring under the plow, so the main hope is in more efficient production.
3. ECA is helping to provide technical advice to European countries.... with 4 of the 15 million dollars of technical aid funds for this year tentatively budgeted for agriculture.
4. European countries are using their counterpart funds (the money their citizens pay for food and agricultural products we turn over to their Governments) for activities such as: reclamation (as in Italy).... Extension work--which is badly needed. .research....and agricultural credit.

What will Western Europe need to import from the U. S. after the end of the Marshall Plan program in '52?

Bread grains. .fats....sugar....cotton....tobacco....feed grains ...etc. With plans for about 11% more cattle, and 8-9% more hogs than pre-war, she'll need more feed grains. .unless she achieves more efficient feeding, and develops other sources of feeds. Holland is producing as much milk as pre-war with 12% fewer dairy cows,. .partly through better pastures, use of potatoes for live-stock feed, and generally greater efficiency. Various north European countries are working on potatoes for feed.

How much market will U. S. farmers have in Western Europe after '52?

Europe will need more agricultural products than U. S. will have to export. The share we get of the market will depend on (a) how our prices compare with others, (b) how many dollars European countries are able to earn in trade with us to buy our wheat, cotton, tobacco, and other products. Barring faster progress than to date, she won't be able to step up her earnings of U. S. dollars fast enough by '52 to buy her usual proportion of food and agricultural products from the U. S. To find ways to help her earn more dollars is the No. 1 problem for long-time recovery (after ECA aid ends)....and for assurance of markets for U.S. farmers.

Thibodeaux paid high tribute to the help that U. S. farm organizations have given in furthering a sound agricultural program in Marshall Plan countries.

ECONOMISTS SURVEY '49 CROPS

USDA's Crop Reporting Board took a year-end look at '49 crop production this week....which was second only to the '48 all-time record. Only a very few individual crops broke records -- rice, dry beans, and pears. But corn and other crops ran high.

Looking for the reason for the big out-turn, the economists explain that we had about 6 million more acres in the 52 main crops in '49 than in '48....or a total of nearly 370 million. .bigger than the '44 wartime high acreage....the largest since '30-33. But power machinery, and increased fertilizer, and generally favorable weather also played a part. Yields for most crops were above average....although wheat, flaxseed, and dry peas were notable exceptions.

THE OUTLOOK FOR WINTER WHEAT

Farmers seeded considerably less winter wheat this fall than last--15% less. But, from present indications, they may come out in '50 with only about 2% less harvested wheat than this year. So says USDA's Crop Reporting Board in this week's report.

Farmers cut acreage in line with the acreage allotment program. But, in cutting, they left their wheat on summer-fallow land and other land best suited to wheat. Result is that it now looks as if they would harvest 16.7 bushels per seeded acre....or about 2 bushels above the '49 average.

AMONG OURSELVES

WOW Gives the Markets by TV

RFD Mal Hansen of WOW in Omaha has been digging pretty deep into TV. (See our RFD Letter for Dec. 2.) Among other things, he is doing a lot of experimenting with market news. Following are some further details of the story as reported in our earlier Letter:

"We are now commercial one day a week, with pretty good chances of going on the same basis for a couple of additional shows. The sponsor is especially anxious to bring movies of high-selling stock at the Omaha stockyards here. Their sponsored show is on Monday. Therefore, we have made an addition to our market broadcast material. In addition to the charts, we now use up to two minutes of film."

"The camera crew gets out to the Omaha stockyards about 9 a.m. There, they are informed by the Omaha Livestock Foundation of the possible high selling loads for the day in both hogs and cattle. They take pictures of the livestock before they are sold, or as soon as they get to the pens. Then, shortly before noon, the Livestock Foundation 'phones the final selling prices....if sold, and the weight of the stock, and the name of the seller. We include this material in our noon broadcast as the film is screened on the television system."

"We have discovered we can stay at the yards until about 10:30 and with the Houston processor, we get the material on the 12:05 p.m. show."

"So far, we have done this twice. But I think it will be a regular feature, as it has attracted a lot of interest. The men at the yards are anxious to have their stock on television. It gives the farmers watching a pretty good idea of what prices are each Monday and it lets the city folks know what is happening at the stockyards. Many of them, for the first time in their lives, get a good look at a barrow and a gilt."

"As to the charts, we are still using them, but have cut down the amount of time for each. The title of the charts reads: 'Hog top at Omaha....cattle top at Omaha....lamb top at Omaha.' The charts are on white cardboard, 12 x 16 in., with a graph reporting the prices of 'two weeks ago,'....'one week ago,'....'this week,'....with a line dividing the markets Monday through Friday. Over the top of each of these charts, we have placed a plastic cover about a quarter of an inch thick. In order to fill in the graph, we use black scotch tape, which is easily ripped off the chart and changed each week, or added as the days pass in the current week."

"One side of the chart has the graph, and the other side is left blank. On the blank side each day, I demonstrate the current trend in the market, such as 'steady,'....'higher or lower,'...with the arrows in the proper direction. Sometimes, I write in the proper side classification, sale,...or, if there is an excessive run on hogs, for instance, I may draw some empty hog sheds to indicate that the animals have moved from the farm."

"On days when the market is down, I may draw a face with the lips turned down, indicating the farmer's attitude."

"We use a felt Speed-Dry pen. This can be erased after each day's use on the plastic cover."

AMONG OURSELVES (CONT'D)

More About WOW-TV

By way of postscript, Mal says that this spring, "we will move in a big box of earth for garden shows. Today, we have a show on rural youth, with rural youth leader Guy Davis and some of the Douglas county members. After discussing their activities, we had a demonstration of a square dance. It went over swell."

Mutrie Forsakes Radio for TV

Our erstwhile RFD colleague across the border -- Fergus Mutrie of CBC -- has given up his agricultural broadcasting for a berth as one of the directors of CBC's television activities. It is expected that Canada's first TV program will be on the air by midsummer of '51. Fergus recently cooperated in a study of TV in Europe and the U. S. He had been in radio for 16 years.

KS00 Inaugurates 4-State AG Roundup

RFD "Red" Stangland, KS00, Sioux Falls, S. D., reports a new series on his noontime Saturday half-hour. Dubbed "The Four-State Agriculture Roundup," the 4-minute programs are specially transcribed for KS00 by the schools of agriculture in the four states, parts of which comprise the KS00 coverage area. Supplying the programs are: Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota.

The 4-State roundup, aired at 12:30 Saturdays was designed to funnel up-to-date Extension material from the counties in the KS00 coverage map.

Cordially,



Kenneth M. Gapen
Ass't Director of Information
for Radio and Television

Enclosure:

ARA Press Release, Dec. 21, 1949.

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RFD LETTER

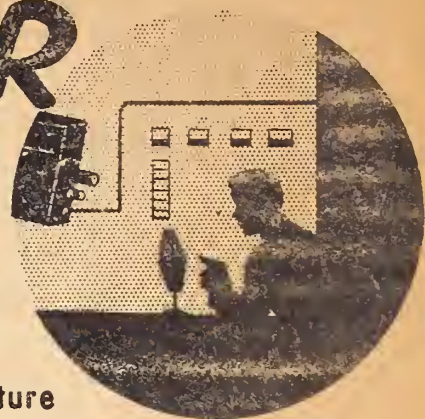
To

Radio Farm Directors

From

Radio and Television Service

Office of Information - U. S. Department of Agriculture



December 30, 1949

AGRICULTURAL BRIEFS

Next week (Jan. 5-6), USDA's new foreign Trade Policy Advisory Committee will hold its organization meeting in Washington. The committee....representing farm organizations, colleges, agricultural industries, etc....will advise on solutions to serious problems confronting trade abroad.

U. S. mills used 2,812,000 bales of American Upland cotton, and 58,000 bales of foreign growth through November of the current season....compared with 2,784,000 Upland and 64,000 foreign for the same months last year.

Plentiful Foods to be given a special plug during February include eggs, dried beans, peas. Even with lower price supports, egg production is expected to be heavy. Beans and peas are also in heavy supply.

The 1950 cotton and cottonseed loan programs will be discussed at a meeting in Washington, Jan. 5-6.

MORE FARM HOMES GET ELECTRICITY

REA reports that 78.2% of the country's farms are electrified....3,044,000 rural consumers served by REA-financed co-ops.

More consumers were added to REA-financed lines in '49 than in all of the first 5 years of the REA loan program.

SCS URGES SPEED ON CONSERVATION SURVEYS

SCS urges completion....as soon as possible....of detailed surveys to determine the capability and conservation needs of the nation's farms. Nearly 500 million acres have been surveyed so far. In its annual report, it also recommends more liberal use of credit for sound conservation operations and investments.

PRICE SUPPORT OUTLOOK FOR '50

What can farmers look forward to in the way of price supports for the New Year?

Well, on the basis of support programs announced so far, it looks as if they can expect much the same level of support in '50 as they've had in '49. As to:

The Basics? Supports continue about as they are; and

The Mandatory Non-Basics? Again, not too much different from the '49 level.

The Basics In Review

This is the story in brief as to support level in relation to parity....and production and marketing programs....for the 6 "basics":

Wheat - 90% - Acreage allotments in effect.

Cotton - 90% - Allotments and marketing quotas in effect.

Tobacco - 90% - Allotments and quotas for all major types.

Peanuts - 90% - Allotments and quotas.

Rice - 90% - Allotments likely in light of present supply outlook; no indication yet as to quotas.

Corn - 90% - Allotments appear likely in light of present supply outlook; no indication yet as to quotas.

As you recall, the new Farm Act says that, for the 6 "basics," either the old, or new, parity formula is to apply....depending on which will give the farmer the better price. The old parity formula now applies for all except rice and tobacco.

The Mandatory Non-Basics

Here's the line-up for the Mandatory non-basics -- which are supported under the new parity formula:

Dairy - The support level for milk for manufactured products is almost identical with '49, money-wise. Or, parity-wise, it's at about 79% of the new parity. The law says it must be between 75 and 90%.

Potatoes - Continue at 60% of parity -- same as last year.

Wool - Old program being continued 90 days to give chance for recommendations for new program. In light of Congressional directive to encourage 360 million pound production, however, support level likely to be near the top of the 60 to 90% range.

PRICE SUPPORT OUTLOOK FOR '50 (CONT'D)

Tung nuts - To be supported at 60% of parity.

Honey and mohair - Support level not yet announced.

The Permissives

Among the large number of permissives, a program for '50 has been announced for:

Eggs - The recently announced support is at about 75% of the new parity.... as against 90% under the old in '49. Money-wise, the national annual average support level will run about 37¢ a dozen....or down about 8¢ from the actual farm price average for '49. Incidentally, some folks have confused that support average with the floor price for nest-run eggs in the Midwest in the dried-egg purchase program which was 35¢ in '49. The important thing to remember is that the national annual average support level is down to 37¢ for '50....compared with the average of 45¢ that farmers received in '49.

FARM EXPORTS DIP LAST HALF OF '49

A big question in the minds of farmers and agricultural officials these days is the future of our foreign farm markets.

Well, we don't have the answer to the future. But USDA's Foreign Agricultural Relations experts do highlight the trends of the year just past. They total the actual figures for the first 10 months, and then project for November and December.

In '49, the U. S. shipped about \$100 million worth more farm stuff abroad than in '48....or \$3.6 billion worth. The first half of the year, exports ran considerably above '48, due mainly to ECA shipments. But the last half, they slumped....ran below the same months a year earlier, mainly because of smaller wheat exports.

As to agricultural imports, they ran \$2.8 billion, or \$400 less than in '48.... due largely to smaller wool imports and lower prices.

FARM AND HOME NETWORK FEATURES, Jan. 7

ABC - American Farmer 12:30-1:00 p.m. EST, (1) "Business Side of Farming," Dana Reynolds; (2) Special Feature.

NBC - National Farm and Home Hour 1:00-1:30 p.m. EST, (1) "USDA Headlines," Ken Gopen; (2) "How it Looks for Farmers in 1950," with Dr. Sherman Johnson of USDA's Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

CBS - CBS Farm News 3:30-3:45 p.m. EST, (1) Claude Mahoney with the news; (2) Special Feature.

ANSWERS ON NEW 'PHONE PROGRAM

As you probably noticed from the story mailed you last week, REA started this week to distribute loan application forms and information about the new rural telephone program. We're enclosing with this issue of the Letter a pocket-sized booklet summarizing the standards and requirements to be met, and the procedure in getting loans.

By way of reminder, applications for loans should be made to the Rural Electrification Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.

STATE PMA MEETINGS COMING UP

FMA reports the following State PMA conferences scheduled for January and February:

Iowa	Jan. 5-6	Des Moines
Wyoming	Jan. 9-11	(Unavailable)
New Hampshire	Jan. 10-11	Concord
Oklahoma	Jan. 10-12	Oklahoma City
Ohio	Jan. 12-13	Columbus
Oregon	Jan. 23-25	Gearhart
Washington	Jan. 26-28	Spokane
Montana	Jan. 30-Feb. 1	Missoula

FORMER FMA HEAD JOINS BUSINESS FIRM

We just learned that E. A. (Woody) Meyer....former administrator of the Research and Marketing Act....has joined a fruit and vegetable processing concern in San Jose, Calif. It's the Richmond-Chase Company.

SCIENTISTS PLAN NEW ATTACKS ON WEEDS

The old-fashioned weed is in for more bad times -- judging from plans and developments to be outlined by 2 USDA men next week at the Northeastern Weed Control Conference in New York.

William E. Meek will describe what you might call the 1, 2, 3 treatment on weeds in cooperative experiments with the Mississippi Agricultural Experiment Station. A light weight 2-row general purpose tractor carried a shovel cultivator on the front....a flame cultivator on the rear....and a complete spray system to apply herbicides. The same spray system can be used for insects. Meek also will report a more efficient type of flame thrower that can be operated at faster speeds. And new rotary weeder attachments mounted between the cultivator gangs for cultivating around young plants. Dr. Karl Quisenberry will discuss new research on weeds in cotton, vegetables, and other crops.

CEA RECOMMENDS LIMITS ON SPECULATION

USDA's Commodity Exchange Authority recommends specific limits on speculation by large traders in eggs, soybeans, wool tops, and cottonseed oil.

AMONG OURSELVES

Battles Names NARFD-USDA Committee

We hear that....as one of his earlier acts of business as new president of the National Association of Radio Farm Directors....Roy Battles has set up the new committee to consult with USDA on services and relationships. The idea of such a committee has been battled around for quite awhile, of course, starting back when Chuck Worcester was president. Retiring president Wallace Kadderly appointed a committee to explore the idea, and it was adopted at the recent Chicago meeting. This is a development that we ourselves have been interested in for a long time, too. Now that the ranks of RFD's with whom we cooperate have grown to around 400, we think such a committee will help keep us in closer touch with the needs and interests of RFD's in various types of situations.

Roy doubtless will announce this and other committees soon.

John Baker Joins PMA Staff

An old friend to a good many of you -- John Baker -- is back with USDA again. This time as chief of the PMA Area Information Office in Chicago.

John did a couple of stints with USDA previously. For about a year in '45-46, he was Assistant Director of Information for Radio in USDA....and, earlier, was Extension Radio Specialist. More recently, he has been with WLS in Chicago. In going with PMA in Chicago, John takes the place of Walter John who is moving into the Washington, D. C. office of PMA.

Motion Pictures for TV

J. Aubrey Smith, of Georgia Extension, tells USDA Motion Picture Service of a plan of televising agricultural footage while describing it on a live "mike," and later putting a sound track on the film from the recorded description. Mr. Smith says:

".....Those films we have used on television are films we made using practically the same technique as producing an 'off-stage' sound film.

"The feature type subject lends itself well to our needs although one 4-H meeting was photographed, the film processed and edited, the narrative written, music selected, and the film televised while the meeting was in process. Black-and-white film was used for speed. The feature type film is photographed in color.

"The station has been very cooperative in working with us. Station personnel narrate as the film is being televised (a system similar to making a sync voice sound track). A disc recording of this is made. Later the disc is re-recorded to film. This in turn is printed with the original giving a color sound print. We are doing the photography, editing and writing.

AMONG OURSELVES (CONT'D)

"So far the system is working out to the benefit of all concerned. The station is happy to get local material, we are glad to get information televised and an additional motion picture for the library."

Toward Better Market News Reporting

FMA has just put out a handbook for market news reporters, "Preparation of Market News for Distribution Through Press and Radio." Along with general suggestions to the reporters on such matters as the importance of keeping personal contact with RFD's to learn their needs, the handbook discusses a few specific pointers on market news copy. For example, "There is ample evidence that listeners like to have the market information presented in the same order each day." And "It is not easy for a listener to be sure that he is connecting the right price with the right commodity. So mention the commodity before giving any other information."

Meeting Reminders

Just a reminder that the 47th annual meeting of the Association of Southern Agricultural Workers is scheduled for Biloxi, Miss., from Thursday, Feb. 9.... through Saturday, Feb. 11. The Western Radio-Television Conference will hold its third annual conference in Seattle, Mar. 3-4. This is the first of a series of moves by the Conference to bring its annual meetings to various radio centers in the West. A request has come from Keith Tyler for all interested parties to send suggestions for speakers, subjects, and group meetings for the annual Institute for Education by Radio at Columbus, May 4-7. The closing date for entering radio programs in the annual competition at the Institute is January 16.

With the RFD's

RFD Howard Heath of WPAG in Ann Arbor, Mich., has started a weekly column in the Washtenaw Post-Tribune called "Farm Chatter." In addition to 2 daily radio programs, Heath works his 43-acre farm. Bill Givens of WGY-WRGB, Schenectady, has a story in the December "Soil Conservation" on the all-day TV show of the farm face-lifting in Massachusetts back in August.

Cordially,

Kem

Kenneth M. Gapen
Ass't Director of Information
for Radio and Television

Enclosure:

Rural Telephone Loan Program